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A history of South Carolina barbeque by Lake E. High, Jr.

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Abstract

Review of *A history of South Carolina barbeque* by Lake E. High, Jr.

Keywords

book review, south carolina barbecue, A history of South Carolina barbeque, Lake E. High Jr. (author)



BOOK REVIEW

A history of South Carolina barbeque by Lake E. High, Jr.

American Palate, a division of The History Press, Charleston, SC, 2013, \$19.99

Before reading this book, I wouldn't have thought that the origins and definition of barbeque as a cooking method and foodstuff would be so hotly contested or controversial. I grew up in the south, so I know that there are regional differences and perspectives surrounding what a given population considers BBQ, bar-b-cue, 'cue, or barbeque. Just agreeing on a spelling can take time. I also know that some people like to argue.

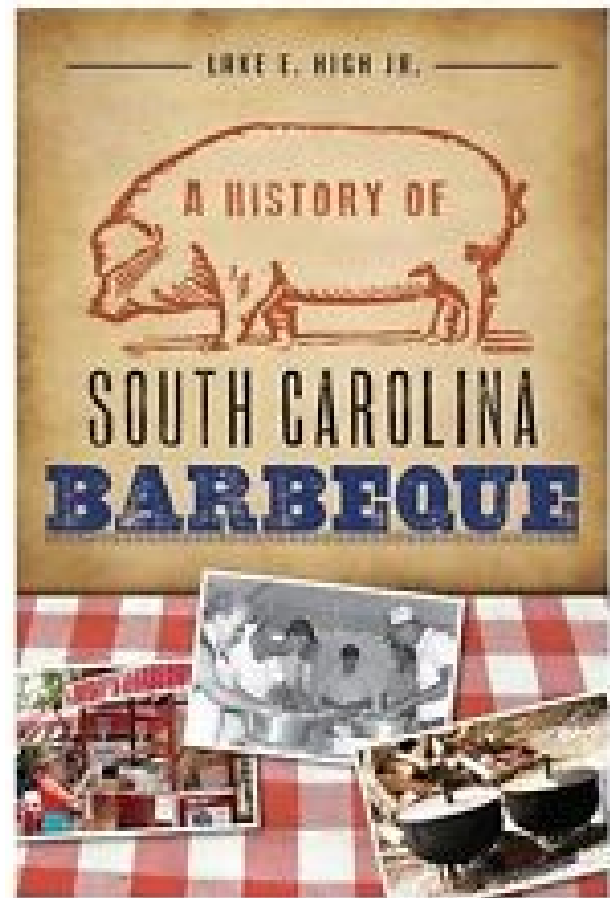
I believe all involved would agree that barbeque involves meat subjected to heat and smoke, and isn't something you do in haste. There is no argument that this author is an aficionado of all things barbeque in South Carolina. As the president and co-founder of the South Carolina Barbeque Association, and an esteemed judge of barbeque, he sets out to definitively state the when, where, how and who of BBQ in SC.

I wanted to relish this book, both for its ties to South Carolina and my favorite food group. But I did not. First, the folksy writing style does not lend itself to a historical examination. And there are some assumptions made in this volume that are hard to ignore, such as: "Since food is loved by all and *many blacks are naturally good cooks*, they took to the art of barbeque quickly and well" (Lake, p. 24, emphasis added).

And there are several references to the author's "sweet wife" which I'm sure she appreciates. However, stating in the acknowledgement section that you cannot remember the name of "...that nice lady... at the Charleston County Library..." seems awkward, and tends toward unprofessional. The researcher in me wishes the typographical errors had been caught in the editing process.

If you are looking for a history of barbeque, there are several online and print resources, which condense the history and comparisons

into fewer pages and do not set out to claim that the colonial world (and barbeque) revolved around Charleston, South Carolina. Many pages of this book are dedicated to supporting the author's claims that the first and best of everything, especially barbeque, started in South Carolina. Nothing against the Palmetto State, but I would have preferred an unbiased history instead of this approach.



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